(i) quality and strength of the fill (plug)

(ii) hydrostatic head of drainage water in relation to the designed capacity of the fill.

Production in mini steel plants

4175. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the installed capacity and the annual steel production of mini steel plants in the country during the last three years capacity-wise and State-wise;

(b) whether production of steel by the mini-steel plants is well below their capacity;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the measures taken/proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) Details of State-wise capacity and production of mini steel plants (Electric Arc Furnace units) are given in the Annexure. (*See* Appendix 173, annexure No. 84).

(b) and (c) Production of steel from the Electric Arc Furnace (EAF) units has been below their installed capacity. The performance of this sector has been adversely affected due to various factors such as increase in input costs like power tariffs, steel melting scrap and also technological obsolescence.

(d) Government has reduced the import duty on steel melting scrap from 12.5 per cent to 5% advalorem. In the Budget of 1995-96, import duty on sponge iron has been reduced from 30% to 20 per cent which is expected to reduce the input cost of coast based EAF units. In addition, State Governmetns were advised to consider supplying uninterrupted power to these units at concessional rates.

In addition, Government has set up a "Core Group" to assist units which are interested in drawing up revival strategies.

Import of coin blanks from Italy

4176. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state.

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to import coin blanks from Italy against the new tender opened on 3.10.94;

(b) if so, the amount of foreign exchange out flow due to importing coin blanks per year;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Salem Steel Plant is able to fulfil Government's demand of coin blanks;

(d) if so, the reason of importing coin blanks; and

(e) if not, the installed capacity of Salem Steel Plant per year and Government's demand of coin blanks per year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) Yes. Sir.

(b) The total anticipated foreign exchange component involved is Italian Lira 12,577,650,000. However, during the financial year 1994-95 no expenditure has been incurred.

(c) and (d) The total requirement of coin blanks is met through various sources, which include own production of coin blanks by the India Government Mints as well as procurement from external sources which inter-alia include supplies made by Salem Steel Plant.